



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
**AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES**



## **COMMISSION ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES** **ANNUAL REPORT**

*"Making a difference in the lives of people with disabilities."*

November 1, 2005

The Honorable Douglas M. Duncan  
Montgomery County Executive

The Honorable Thomas E. Perez  
President, Montgomery County Council

Dear Mr. Duncan and Mr. Perez:

The Commission on People with Disabilities is pleased to present a summary of its activities for the past year. We continue to advise and consult with you on issues of concern to the safety and well-being of the estimated over 180,000 people with disabilities who live in Montgomery County.

The Commission continues to work to improve the lives of people with disabilities who work, visit or live in our County. Under your leadership and with your support, the Commission is mandated to ensure that the County government complies with all Federal, State and local laws that guarantee the rights of people with disabilities, particularly the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Supreme Court's 1999 Olmstead Decision which upheld the "integration mandate" of the Americans with Disabilities Act requiring public agencies to provide services "in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities."

Each of the Commissioners has lent their knowledge, expertise and talent to the County by providing valuable input and advice on issues affecting people with disabilities such as greater input to state and county emergency services, accessibility in the housing industry, and removing barriers related to the move and enhancing services of the Special Needs Library as it prepares to move in 2006. From efforts to comply with the Olmstead Decision to accessibility on Ride On Bus we have taken positions and given advice on how best to ensure greatest access.

We wish to recognize and give our personal thanks to all Commissioners, the many community members, and the agency staff who participate in our meetings for their commitment and dedication in promoting the civil rights and independence of people with disabilities. In addition, the Commission is grateful to the Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Disabilities Services, for the staff support it has received in pursuit of its goals from Betsy Tolbert Luecking, Program Manager, Gloria Huggins, Office Services Coordinator, and Dr. Jay Kenney, Chief, Aging and Disability Services.

It has been a pleasure to work with you and members of the Commission during our term of service. We are confident that you will continue to support the Commission's efforts to enhance the lives of people with disabilities. Our meetings are open to the public, and we invite you to join us for any meeting.

Sincerely,



*Michael J. Bruen*  
Michael J. Bruen  
Chair

*Craig A. Brieske*  
Craig A. Brieske  
Vice Chair



### **NOVEMBER, 2005**

#### **Inside this Report**

<b>Membership List</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2004-2005 Commissions Accomplishments/ Highlights</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Speakers Bureau</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Did you know?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Fifteen Year Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Publications provided by the Commission</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Who has a disability in Montgomery County?— An Overview</b>	<b>6-7</b>
<b>Special Needs Library</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Reports from the Committees</b>	<b>9-10</b>
<b>Assistive Listening Devices in County Conference Rooms</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Plan 9 Emergency Preparedness Guide</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Reports from the Workgroups</b>	<b>11-13</b>
<b>About the Commission</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2006 Commission Committee Meeting Schedule</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Disability Related Websites of Interest</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>New HHS Information Line</b>	<b>16</b>

# MEMBERSHIP

**2004-2005**

## VOTING MEMBERS

### **PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

Craig A. Brieske  
Connie Caldwell  
Anita L. Cohen  
Kimball L. Gray  
Russ Holt  
Karen Kuker-Kihl  
Alan Laskin

Beryl Neurman  
Aileen R. O'Hare  
John P. S. Salmen  
David C. Sharp  
Harold W. Snider, Ph.D.  
Lanie Vaughan

### **PARENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Michael J. Bruen  
Michael Hetchkop  
Joan B. Riley

### **PRIVATE AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES**

Michael W. Briese, *Independence Now*  
Christina M. Byrne, *The Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Institute*  
Roberta S. Carlin, *American Association on Health and Disability*  
Shane Feldman, *National Association of the Deaf*  
Stephen R. Hage, *Strategies for Independent Living*  
Lise Hamlin, *Self Help for the Hard of Hearing*  
Nelson Jackson, *MedHelp, Inc.*  
Juliette Rizzo, *U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education*  
Marcie Roth, *Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council*

## NON-VOTING MEMBERS

### **PUBLIC AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES**

Babette Coulton, *Department of Public Works and Transportation, Division of Transit Services*  
Richard W. Earp, *Department of Public Works and Transportation, Annual Sidewalk Program*  
Nancy Greene, *ADA Compliance Officer, Department of Health and Human Services*  
Kathy Kolan, *Montgomery County Public Schools*  
Francie Gilman, *Department of Public Libraries, Special Needs Library*  
Jackie D. Simon, *Human Relations Commission*  
Phil Smakula, *Department of Recreation*  
Susan Smith, *Housing Opportunities Commission*  
Darlene Taper, *Department of Health and Human Services, School Health Services*  
Angela J. Washington-Bivans, *Office of Human Resources, Equal Employment & Diversity*  
Brenda Williams, *Montgomery College, Disability Support Services*

### **STAFF**

Betsy Tolbert Luecking, *Program Manager II*  
Gloria Huggins, *Office Services Coordinator*  
John (Jay) Kenney, Ph.D., *Chief, Aging and Disability Services*

## 2004 – 2005 COMMISSION ACCOMPLISHMENTS/HIGHLIGHTS

### ■ **Emergency Preparedness Involvement:**

- Coordination with State Department of Disabilities in an Emergency Planning Conference for people with disabilities held on February 10, 2005 at the North Bethesda Marriott Hotel and Conference Center
- Presentation by Gordon Aoyagi, Director of Homeland Security at the June, 2005 meeting
- Appointment of **commissioners to County's special populations' workgroup.**

### ■ **Assessment and Recommendations to Strathmore Music Center**, the North Bethesda Hotel and Conference Center, and the Rockville Library on accessibility enhancements

### ■ **Installation of audio loops at:**

- 401 Hungerford Drive
- 1335 Piccard Drive
- 1301 Piccard Drive
- 8818 Georgia Avenue

### ■ **County adding CART interpreting** to the sign language contract

### ■ **Design of Wide Enough for Wheels snow removal campaign**

### ■ **Advisory to Department of Libraries on the move of the Special Need Library** collection to the new Rockville Regional Library

### ■ **Advisory to HHS Service Integration** on disability issues

### ■ **Advisory to accessible Bus stop inventory and Ride On accessibility**

### ■ **Home and Personal Safety presentation** by David Baker, Hate Crime Coordinator with the Department of Police Community Outreach Section

### ■ **Advocating for Universal Design** throughout the County

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” — Margaret Mead*

### **SPEAKERS BUREAU ON DISABILITY ISSUES**

If you or your organization would like a speaker on disability issues or a consultation, please contact us at 240-777-1246 (Voice); 240-777-1236 (TTY) or by e-mail at [betsy.luecking@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:betsy.luecking@montgomerycountymd.gov)

# DID YOU KNOW?

## DEMOGRAPHICS

- Nationally, it is estimated that 1 in 5 persons has some type of disability. Thirty-two percent of county seniors have some disability. A physical disability is the most frequently reported (11%) followed by go-outside-home disability (9%).
- The 2000 U.S. census reports that 17% of Marylanders between the ages of 20 and 65 have a disability. Thirty-nine percent of Maryland citizens over 65 have a disability.
- There are over 70,000 veterans living in the County.

## DIVERSITY

- Disability runs across all racial and cultural backgrounds. Aging and Disability Services (ADS) of Montgomery County works to be culturally competent in the delivery of all our services.
- ADS has greatly expanded their community outreach to the increasingly diverse population in Montgomery County and the County efforts to facilitate the inclusion of people with disabilities and their families.
- The Washington D.C. corridor has an estimated 1/2 million persons who are deaf or hard of hearing which is one of the highest concentration in the country mostly attributed to Gallaudet University and the hiring practices of the Federal government.
- The Project Career Program through TransCen, Inc. in partnership with Deaf Reach work with people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind or deaf with additional barriers including foreign born who do not know American Sign Language and are job seeking.

## GREATER COMMUNITY ACCESS

- Montgomery County has completed over \$4 million in renovations to existing facilities and installed more than 4,000 curb cuts to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

■ Any street renovations will now include the installation of Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS). To request an APS call Bruce Mangum at 240-777-8778

■ It is important that all communities be knowledgeable about ADA compliance. The ADA Information Center for the Mid-Atlantic Region is located on Rockville Pike. Please contact them for technical assistance at 800-949-4232 (Voice/TTY).

## HOUSING

- ADS fund approximately \$8.1 million in grants to providers of developmental disability services and \$1.2 million in grants to the Residential Rehabilitation Program providers to assist in housing costs for people with disabilities.
- ADS also provides matching funds and supportive services resulting in the addition of 162 units of permanent supportive housing to people with various disabilities through Housing Urban Development (HUD) competitive continuum of care process.

## FAMILY CAREGIVERS

- Montgomery County has a Respite Care Program that services approximately 60% of caregivers of persons with disabilities and 40% of caregivers of senior.
- The State of Maryland contributes \$200,000 to the Respite Care Program and the County contributes about \$900,000. Monthly, this program serves 250 family caregivers with about 8,500 hours per month.

## TRANSPORTATION

- Health and disability status are stronger predictors of the need for transportation than age alone.
- Currently, the County has established a Transportation Committee for Seniors and People with Disabilities.
- Effective September 2004 100% of the County's Ride On Buses are accessible.

## CHALLENGES

### Access to Health Care and Prescription Drugs

Between November 15th and May 15th, 2006, over 115,000 seniors and people with disabilities who are Medicare recipients in the Montgomery County will be deciding whether or not to participate in Medicare Part D and selecting a pharmacy plan that covers their medication.

### Medicaid Waivers

The Medicaid Waiver waiting lists as of October 24, 2005 were estimated as follows:

- 5,320 for the older adults waiver,
- 1,300 for the Living at Home Community Choice waiver—physically disabled (ages 21-59),
- 1,300 for the autism waiver and
- 15,000 for persons with developmental disabilities

Totaling an estimated 22,920 persons across the state on Medicaid waiting lists. Maryland has one of the lowest Medicaid eligibility income limits in the country, and matches that of Mississippi.

### COG MetroAccess Workgroup

The Council on Governments (COG) has established a committee to improve the demand responsive services in the Washington Region. The Committee is currently studying the demand for paratransit services, customer needs and concerns, innovative and cost effective ways to provide potential service and funding coordination. Jay Kenney, Betsy Luecking along with Commissioner David Sharp and Department of Public Works and Transportation representative Calvin Green serve on this Committee.

MetroAccess will be installing a software program that will eliminate their current process of manual scheduling. We are hoping for improved service.



## County Commemorates Fifteen Year Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

On Wednesday, July 26, 2005, the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), County Executive Duncan reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to support this landmark civil rights legislation by issuing a proclamation accepted by Kermit Mohn, Chair Emeritus, Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities. Kermit was Chair of the Commission when the ADA was enacted. The Commission was pleased with the number of persons participating in this event.

The proclamation expressed the resolve of the County to continue its progress in assur-



County Executive Duncan, Kermit Mohn, disability advocates and staff receiving the proclamation

ing full participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of community life.

Mr. Duncan concluded, "While we've come a long way during these 15 years, more can be done in areas of affordable and accessible housing, transportation and employment opportunities for all of our residents. I look forward to continuing to work to assure accessibility and full inclusion of all residents in every aspect of community life. Montgomery County is committed to excellence and innovation in empowering families and people with disabilities to live the lives of their choice in our community."

### Publications Provided by the Commission on People with Disabilities



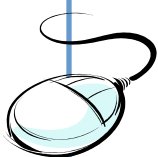
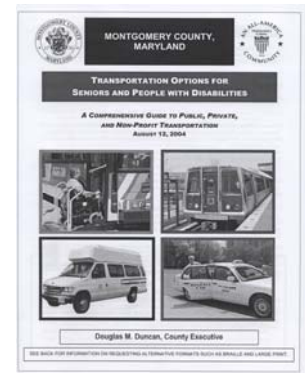
#### DISABILITY NETWORK DIRECTORY:

A directory of provider agencies, businesses and advocacy organization. The directory is provided upon request to people seeking local resources for people with disabilities.

(Both publications are also on County Website—  
See Website location below)

#### TRANSPORTATION GUIDE FOR

**SENIORS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES:** A comprehensive listing of public, private and non-profit transportation in the Washington Metropolitan Region, State of Maryland and beyond. The guide was compiled as a useful service to assist County residents to better coordinate their transportation needs.



Visit the Disability Access and Opportunity Website:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov>

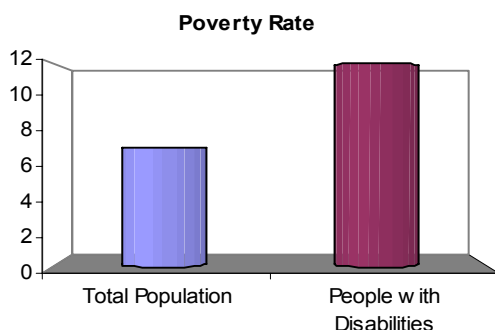
Click on Residents, go to Resident Services and then click on Disability Services.

# WHO HAS A DISABILITY IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND?— AN OVERVIEW

The Harris Interactive, Inc. 2000 Survey for the National Organization on Disabilities found that 68% of those with disabilities of working age (18-64) are unemployed. In Montgomery County, 31.3% are unemployed, which is lower than the national average. Published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Americans with Disabilities: 1991-1992 utilized a functional/social definition of disability and determined that 19.4% of Americans have a disability. In the County, 12.3% self identified as having a disability and this is lower than the national average. This excluded individuals who reside in nursing homes or other institutions. Based on a population of 914,900 persons, we have extrapolated the national figures and estimated the number of people who have different types of disabilities who live in Montgomery County in this charts shown below:

Functional Ability	National %	Estimated Montgomery County Residents
Difficulty seeing words/letters — low vision	5.0%	45,700
Unable to see words/letters — blind	0.8%	7,319
Difficulty hearing conversation — hard of hearing	5.6%	51,234
Unable to hear conversation — deaf	0.5%	4,574
Difficulty having speech understood	1.2%	10,978
Unable to have speech understood	0.1%	914
Uses a wheelchair	0.8%	7,319
Uses a cane/crutch/walker	2.0%	18,298
Mental/emotional	3.5%	32,027
Mental retardation	0.6%	5,489

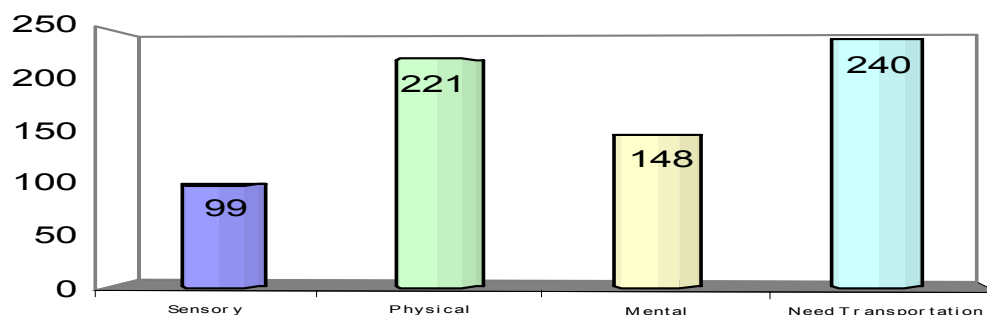
## Poverty and unemployment rates are twice as high in the disabled community



Source: 2000 Census. Numbers refer to Washington, DC-MD-VA MSA.

## What is the demand for Specialized transportation services?

Types of Disabilities in the Washington Region by Thousands



Source: 2000 Census. Categories are not discrete. Numbers refer to Washington, DC-MD-VA MSA.

# WHO HAS A DISABILITY IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND? — AN OVERVIEW

According to the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning 2000 Supplementary Survey Summary, the Disability Status of the Civilian Non-institutionalized Population in Montgomery County is as follows:

Population 5 to 20 years of age	184,200
With a disability	12,611
Population 21 to 64 years of age	527,217
With a disability	64,656
Percentage Employed	68.7%
Without a disability	462,561
Percentage Employed	81.7%
Population 65 years and over	93,319*
With a disability	30,541
<b>Total Number of People with Disabilities</b>	<b>107,808</b>

\* According to the 2000 Census, the total number of persons aged 65+ is 98,157 which includes people in nursing homes.

## Social Security Recipients

As of December, 2003, there are 10,823 people receiving Social Security in Montgomery County. The Social Security Breakdown is as follows:

Seniors	5,135
People with disabilities	5,688
People under 18	3,835
People 65 or older	6,155
Social Security Insurance recipients also receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	2,443

The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services administers the Infant and Toddler's Program for children ages 0-2 years with developmental delays. Information reflects the number of children served in FY04 for Infants and Toddlers Program.

**Infants and Toddlers Program 2,290**

Number of Montgomery County Public School Students Ages 3-21 Receiving Special Education Services in 2003—2004 by Disability (based on enrollment October 31, 2003)\*

Group	Number	%
Autism	684	3.9
Deaf	125	0.7
Deaf-Blind	2	0.0
Developmental Delay	438	2.5
Emotional Disturbance	1141	6.6
Hearing Impairment	131	0.8
Mental Retardation	559	3.2
Multiple Disabilities	798	4.6
Orthopedic Impairment	84	0.5
Other Health	1558	9.0
Specific Learning Disability	6147	35.5
Speech and Language Impairment	5567	32.1
Traumatic Brain Injury	39	0.2
Visual Impairments	61	0.4
Group	Number	%
September 30th Enrollment	139,201	100
Special Education Services	17,334	12.5

\* Information from "The State of Special Education," School Year 2004-2005, Montgomery County Public Schools.



## Did you know?

The Maryland State Department of Education acknowledges that 13% to 15% of children in school have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan to accommodate a disability.

## Special Needs Library

### CRAIG A. BRIESKE, VICE CHAIR AND SPECIAL NEEDS LIBRARY LIAISON

The Special Needs Library (SNL) has been a separate branch of the County library system serving people with disabilities countywide, and during the past two years budgetary issues caused reductions in both hours and staffing for the SNL.

When plans were announced last year for a new library in Rockville, after significant study by the Department of Libraries, the decision was made to relocate the SNL services to that facility when it opens in the Fall of 2006. By doing so, the Disability Resource Center, as the services will most likely be known, will become part of a centrally-located facility that eventually expects about one million visitors per year.

The SNL services will be at a location with regular hours each day, have a larger staff knowledgeable in and able to work with disability issues and persons with disabilities, and the current SNL customers will have more access to business and government collections, which should assist them better plan their own future. The business and government communities will have more access to interact with persons with disabilities, enhancing opportunities for education and employment of persons with disabilities.

As with any major change, there have been a number of concerns raised by SNL customers. To address these concerns, during the year, the Commission worked closely through its liaison with the SNL, the SNL Library Advisory Committee (LAC) and the Department of Libraries to address both physical and programmatic accessibility issues. In February 2005, a Planning Group consisting of representatives from the Department of Libraries, key staff of the SNL and Rockville Libraries, SNL LAC representatives, the Commission's SNL Liaison and the County ADA Compliance Officer, was established. This group has diligently addressed physical accessibility issues both within the new Rockville Library and the surrounding area, including parking, drop-off points, transportation and infrastructure. Architects, engineers and planners from both the County and City of Rockville have been invited to, and had open discussions with the Planning Group during the spring and summer of 2005, from which a comprehensive list of recommendations was prepared



***When completed,  
the new Rockville  
Regional Library will  
be the largest in  
Montgomery County  
system at  
approximately 71,500  
square feet.***

and submitted to the County Librarian.

As a result of these recommendations, the Mayor of Rockville invited the County Librarian to meet with him and help determine what best steps can be taken to make this a positive and as fully accessible project as can be designed.

As the year ends, the Library Department is now in the implementation stage of the recommendations. Parker Hamilton, the new Director, has assured the Planning Group that its continuing input is important to the success of this project, which will address the needs of our residents with disabilities.

With implementation of these recommendations, cross-training of the current SNL and Rockville staffs has been designed and is beginning, and will continue up to and beyond the merger of these two facilities. Once the libraries are in place, the Planning Group will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of training and any immediate accessibility concerns for several months after merger of the facilities. Once best-practices have been established from this process, over the next few years the long-term plan calls for staff in all branches to receive training on disability issues and how to work with persons with disabilities.

The library, which will cost approximately \$26.3 million, will be the largest in the Montgomery County system when completed. The front of the library will face the public plaza of Rockville Town Square.

The library will be about 71,500 square feet, plus 12,700 square feet for library administration and another 14,700 square feet of office space for other county agencies. It will hold approximately 140,000 volumes from its present site on the Corner of Maryland Avenue and Vinson Street. An additional 60,000 volumes will be purchased over a three-year period. There will be two large meeting rooms available for public use and 60 accessible computers.

Plans call for a new Maryland District Court to be built on the site of the current library.



# REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEES

## ADA/Disability Rights Committee

DAVID C. SHARP, CHAIR  
ANITA L. COHEN, VICE CHAIR

### ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS:

- **Access Housing Workgroup:** Members of the ADA Committee have participated on the Access Housing Workgroup, with the Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital, and members of the community to design a workable housing model that would provide housing for people with disabilities and their attendants.
- **Access for All Committee:**
  - **MetroAccess Steering Committee:** David Sharp and Betsy Luecking were selected by the Access for All Committee in Washington, D.C. to participate in the MetroAccess Steering Committee to review the obstacles and recommend a strategic plan for improving the services of MetroAccess.
  - **Transportation Planning Board:** David Sharp and Commissioner Connie Caldwell, have participated on the Access for All Committee through the Transportation Planning Board to monitor, review, and make recommendations for maintaining accessible modes of all transportation for people with disabilities.
- **Access Board of Maryland:** David Sharp has participated this past year with the Community Access Board of the Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene to provide oversight of the Nursing Home Transition Program Grant and the Hospital Outreach Program Grant.

### ACCESSIBLE PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS (APS):

- The American Council of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind identified intersections where APS technology can be used.

### BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Chairperson, along with committee chairpersons, made budget recommendations regarding respite care, special needs library, reducing waiting list for in-home services, developmental disability services, and accessible features in County facilities.

### BUILDING CODES AND ADA COMPLIANCE:

- The Committee has collaborated with the County Permitting Office to enable persons with disabilities designated by the Commission to participate with the intermediate walk through to assure compliance of the ADA related building codes for new construction.

### BUS STOP RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Committee has made ongoing recommendations to Jeff Dunkel of the Department of Public Works and Transportation during two ADA Committee meetings regarding the needs assessment and ADA accessibility of the 5,500 Ride On bus stops.

### SNOW REMOVAL CAMPAIGN—WIDE ENOUGH FOR WHEELS:

- Commissioners Beryl Neurman and John Salmen produced a flyer, and public service announcements in local papers and cable, encouraging businesses and private citizens to be aware and comply with the snow removal law called Wide Enough for Wheels.



#### ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICES IN COUNTY CONFERENCE ROOMS

When you see this sign, it indicates that an assistive listening device or audio loop is available in the conference or meeting room. These systems transmit sound via hearing aids or head sets.

Three (3) conference rooms at Health and Human Services Office Building, 401 Hungerford Drive, are equipped with a custom integrated audio loop and public address system.

Several people who are hard of hearing have had the opportunity to test the HHS system and they report that “the system’s sound quality and strength are exceptionally good. One listener with a severe-to-profound hearing loss described it as among the best she has ever heard.”

Montgomery County has other buildings with loop systems installed, notably the Special Needs Library, the County Council hearing room, and the auditorium at the Executive Office Building.

# REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE

## Disability Services Oversight Committee

NELSON JACKSON, CHAIR

During the year, the Disability Services Oversight Committee (DSOC) considered and acted on various proposals and areas of concern to the committee members and friends who attended the meetings. Some of them include:

### INPUT ON THE AGING AND DISABILITY STRATEGIC PLAN

One of the proudest moments for me as chair was the level of enthusiasm, dedicated work and expertise on a variety of issues that were addressed when the committee members and friends provided input on the Aging and Disability Strategic Plan. The members and friends recommended direct and concise wording to address the needs of people with disabilities in our community.

### MEDICAID WAIVERS PROGRAM:

The County works with the state in the coordination of the following waivers:

- Living at Home waiver for people with physical disabilities,
- Development Disability Administration Waiver,
- Autism Waiver, and
- Older Adult Waiver

Before the calendar year ends the DSOC will educate the members about waivers, solicit input and personal anecdotes about the advantages and disadvantages of the program, and how to get increased budget revenues to fund these program.

### IDENTIFYING AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND AREAS OF CONCERN IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

The Committee was brought up to date on the facilities within the school system that have been identified as user friendly and also those that need vast amounts of improvement. We were given statistical data on the numbers of students affected and acquainted with the problems that the rural schools have that are different from the urban schools.

### FUTURE GOALS

The Disability Services Oversight Committee takes an active role in the development and the implementation of policy as it affects the lives of people with disabilities.

We continue to make the general public aware and inclusive of any comprehensive plans.

The Committee and the Commission get a clear understanding and location of persons with disabilities so that we can better serve their needs.

### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The Commission has actively been involved in working with the State Department of Disability and Montgomery County on emergency preparedness. The DSOC will recommend more specific information on shelters, accessibility for people with disabilities, and equally important the transportation issues involved in a crisis situation.



### PERSONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

The Commission had two Emergency Preparedness presentation this year by County representatives: Ann F. Yeamans, Public Health Services, Emergency Preparedness and Response and Gordon A. Aoyagi, Department of Homeland Security.

Both presenters reported the Montgomery County has emergency response plans in place for dealing with emergencies from snow storms to terrorist attacks.

However, each person must have a personal plan. Montgomery County has developed the **Plan 9 guide** for residents. It is a simple guide to nine essential items to help residents shelter in-place during emergencies.

1. **Water:** keep one gallon of bottled water per person per day for drinking and washing. Replace the water every 6 months.
2. **Food:** keep a supply of nonperishable food to last 3 to 5 days per person.
3. **Clothing:** keep a change of clothes and footwear per person. Consider packing blankets, raingear and outerwear in cast of severe weather.
4. **Medication:** collect three days worth of prescription medications. Be sure to mark the expiration dates and change as needed.
5. **Flashlight:** keep a bright flashlight for power outages. Do not use candles as they are fire hazards. Check on batteries.
6. **Can opener:** keep a manual can opener. Buying foods with pull-open cans is also helpful.
7. **Radio:** a battery powered radio will keep you updated on news and developments. Crank operated or solar powered radios are also helpful. Check on batteries
8. **Hygiene items:** pack the basics such as soap, toilet paper, toothbrush and toothpaste. Moist toliettes are useful.
9. **First aid items:** antiseptic, gloves, bandages, nonprescription medicine. Many stores have pre-made kits.

For more information about Plan 9 or personal emergency preparedness plans, call the Health and Human Services hotline at 240-777-1245 V, 240-777-1295 TTY, or visit the websites:

[www.makeaplan.org](http://www.makeaplan.org) or  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)

# REPORT FROM THE WORKGROUPS

## Communication Access Workgroup

**SHANE FELDMAN, CHAIR**

**LISE HAMLIN, CO-CHAIR**

The Communication Access Subcommittee addressed the following issues this year:

### **STRATHMORE MUSIC HALL**

- Sent a request to Strathmore Hall to make neck loops an option for hard of hearing guests. Strathmore responded that they have neck loops and that they will be training staff to ensure that patrons know that is an option.

### **AUDIO LOOP SYSTEM INSTALLATIONS**

- Initiated effort to have Health and Human Services install integrated audio loop systems with public address system into meeting rooms at 401 Hungerford Drive. We have had good reports from users of the system.

### **CONTRACTS FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING**

- Pushed for a clause to be included in mental health service proposals that makes it clear that those services must be inclusive, i.e., must provide assistive listening devices for people who are deaf and hard of hearing, both for group sessions and one-on-one therapy.

### **COMPUTER ASSISTED REAL-TIME (CART)**

- Contributed feedback to the new County contract for sign language interpreter services. New County contract now includes provision for CART (Computer Assisted Real-time Captioning) accommodations, and other provisions.

### **VIDEO REMOTE INTERPRETING (VRI)/VIDEO RELAY SERVICES (VRS)**

- Advocated for trial Video Relay System (VRS)/ Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) installation in two locations in the County, possibly in libraries. VRI would allow people who are deaf or hard of hearing who have not made an appointment to be provided access when they walk in for services. VRS would allow deaf or hard of hearing people to place phone calls using sign language.

- Discussed the possibility of providing VRI at police stations for deaf and hard of hearing people who have been arrested.

### **EMPLOYMENT ISSUES**

- Discussed strategies to educate businesses about providing accommodations to deaf or hard of hearing employees and encourage more businesses to hire deaf or hard of hearing people.

### **COMCAST AND FEDERAL COMMUNICATION COMMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

- Met with staff from Comcast regarding emergency broadcasting and captioning requirements for television broadcasters. The committee will continue to work to ensure that needs of people who are deaf and blind are considered by Comcast and in compliance with the law and Federal Communication Commission (FCC) regulations.

### **“PROJECT CAREER” AND OTHER STAFF TRAINING**

- Drafted a letter supporting the extension and re-funding of the “Project Career” pilot program to provide training for and hire counselors who have background and knowledge about deaf and hard of hearing people who do not understand sign language. The project has been extended and re-funded by the state of Maryland.
- Encouraged Montgomery County to regularly train staff on the use of equipment and services that provides access to people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

### **“ALERT MONTGOMERY”**

- Montgomery County now has a free emergency notification system for the public which is a tremendous benefit for deaf and hard of hearing people who rely on their wireless devices or email. To sign up go to [www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov) and click on “Alert Montgomery”.

# REPORT FROM THE WORKGROUPS

## Housing Workgroup

### AFFORDABILITY AND SUPPORT SERVICES

CHRISTINA M. BRYNE, CHAIR

**Composition of Committee Membership:** Members of the Commission on People with Disabilities as well as members of the disability community, including representatives from Jubilee Association, Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Institute, Housing Opportunities Commission, Department of Health and Human Services Aging & Disability Services, Special Needs Housing and Core Service Agency, Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, Springfield Hospital Center, and Independence Now.

**Special Guests:** Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission, Montgomery County Department of Housing & Community Affairs (DHCA); Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development; and Senator Sharan Grosfeld

**Purpose:** To increase the number of people with disabilities living in housing that they own or rent themselves in Montgomery County.

**Goal 1:** To make recommendations on how available funding should be used to best support the housing needs of persons with disabilities within the currently accepted practices of the disability community and as outlined in the Olmstead Decision.

**What We've Accomplished:** This workgroup worked with the disability community to form a united voice as we advocated collectively for the following legislative actions:

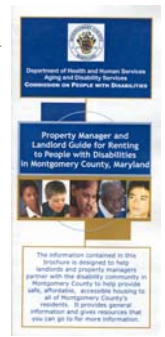
- Ask for 25% (\$5M) of the \$20M Housing Initiative Fund to be committed to developing affordable housing for those whose income is at or below 30% of the area median income, including those with disabilities.
- Ask the County Executive to change the executive regulations governing the Montgomery County Rental Assistance Program such that funding can be used to support deeper rental subsidies for those whose income is at or below 30% of the area median income, including those with disabilities.
- Ask the County Executive to use County owned land as a leverage point to encourage non-profit developers to develop housing for those whose income is at or below 30% of the area median income, including those with disabilities.

The unified voice from the disability community was well received in the County Council and it was powerful for

them to hear the same message from different cross disability groups. As a result of our advocacy, the budget did reflect an increase to the Montgomery County Rental Assistance Program. Although they didn't take action on all of the points we presented, it clearly caught their attention and has created a dialogue that we will keep going by periodically reminding them of these important issues – especially around the issue of how Housing Initiative Funds are used to provide housing for those whose income is at or below 30% of the area median income.

**Goal 2:** To develop partnerships with other organizations who are working to increase affordable housing in Montgomery County to find ways to include meeting the needs of persons with disabilities.

**What We've Accomplished:** We developed a brochure intended to assist Landlords and Property Managers in Montgomery County to partner with the disability community to increase the successful lease up of safe, affordable, accessible rental housing for all persons with disabilities. It was printed by DHCA and distributed to Landlords and Property Managers with their annual licensing renewal. We've received positive feedback from Property Managers who were able to use the information in the brochure to determine the accessibility features of their rental units. We also made our first presentation to the Property Managers of Montgomery Housing Partnerships, which resulted in opening up an on-going dialogue on how to best support renters with disabilities and they are currently advertising their accessible units through the Commission on People with Disabilities before putting them on the open rental market. Additional presentations on this material will be available, as requested.



**Goal 3:** To share information to help everyone understand and respond to the housing needs of the disability community.

**What We've Accomplished:** We've met with representatives from Montgomery County Department of Housing & Community Affairs, Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission, Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development, and Senator Sharon Grosfeld to review the Governor's Housing Policy and strategize on ways we can maximize available resources to secure a sufficient supply of safe, affordable, accessible housing. ■



# REPORT FROM THE WORKGROUPS

## Housing Workgroup

### DESIGN FOR LIFE / VISIT-ABILITY SUB COMMITTEE

JACKIE D. SIMON, CHAIR

*Design for Life* is a proposed voluntary home certification program for new home building and remodeling in Montgomery County that the Commission has been working on for the past several years. Increasing longevity and other medical progress result in a more diverse physical population, continually changing over our lifetimes. Once you own a home, or if you want to own a home, you want to be comfortable in that home forever. You want everyone who visits to be welcome and comfortable. *Design for Life* certification will help assure that homes certified by the program will continue to meet the needs of the occupants and be welcome to their guests for many years.

This voluntary program is being developed with participation by the building community, organizations representing the aging and disabled, County government, as well as private and public organizations whose goal is to increase the number of houses available in the County that include features important to our growing and diverse community. The workgroup meets monthly and includes staff from Permitting Services. The mission is to make more housing opportunities available while increasing style and design without adding substantial construction costs. The group is also working on a zoning text amendment similar to that in Fairfax, Virginia that would make accessibility features in new construction and renovation a right, and therefore a special exception would not be required as it is now. This will need to be introduced as local legislation.

Features included in the *Design for Life* program generally follow principles found in the national *Visit-Ability* movement and studies of an emerging design principle called Universal Design. These programs offer benefits to all parties concerned.



Photo by Concrete Change — 2004  
[www.concretechange.org](http://www.concretechange.org)

#### *Did you know?*

*A majority of County residents, age 55 and older, plan to remain in their current residence for the rest of their lives.*

#### BENEFITS TO THE HOMEOWNER/HOMEBUYER

- Welcomes all visitors
- Easier to live in
- Easier to maneuver
- Provides more comfort for elders and people with mobility needs
- Reduces the risk of falling
- Enhances your everyday life style
- Provides home for life

#### BENEFITS TO THE BUILDER

- Targets new emerging markets
- Offers cutting edge features
- Recognition of superior product
- Recognition of attention to buyer needs
- Offers branding opportunities

#### BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY INCLUDE

- Increased neighborhood continuity promotes inclusion of all population segments

*Design for Life* is a two-tiered certification program.

- **Level I — Visit-Ability** meaning that the home has at least one no-step entrance, 36 inch front door and hallways, a useable bathroom with a 32 inch wide door, and a place to visit on that level.
- **Level II — Live-Ability** includes all items in Level I, but also requires an accessible bedroom and kitchen.

The wording and definitions of this section is provided by Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services. The group hopes to make this voluntary program official and the zoning text amendment for accessibility introduced in the upcoming months.

Commissioners Cindy Buddington, David Sharp, John Salmen, Steve Hage serve on this workgroup along with Betsy Luecking.

**LOOK WHO YOU WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO INVITE HOME FOR DINNER IF YOUR HOME IS NOT VISIT-ABLE:**

MAX CLELAND, U.S. Senator from Georgia, head of Veterans Administration under President Carter  
RICHARD PRYOR, actor-comedian  
ANNETTE FUNICELLO, ex-Mouseketeer, who has multiple sclerosis  
STEPHEN HAWKINS, physicist, who has ALS  
JOHN HOCKENBERRY, onetime NPR reporter, current Dateline NBC correspondent and MSNBC host  
ELEANOR SMITH, founder of a Georgia advocacy group called Concrete Change  
CINDY BUDDINGTON, past Chair, Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities

## ABOUT THE COMMISSION

### HISTORY

The Commission on People with Disabilities was established by County legislation in 1978 to advise the County Executive and County Council on the coordination and development of the County's policies affecting residents with disabilities.

### MISSION

The Commission provides advice, counsel, and recommendations to the Government of Montgomery County, Maryland in general, the County Executive, and the County Council in particular. Its responsibilities involve those matters influencing the provision of services, County policies and procedures, development and implementation of state and federal laws, and any other issues affecting the lives, rights, and welfare of the people it represents. The Commission operates in belief that people with disabilities have the right to the same opportunities in life as people without disabilities; and that this right can best be ensured by a commitment to enhancing the image, status, and quality of life of all children and adults with disabilities.

### MEMBERSHIP

The Commission on People with Disabilities is composed of 25 voting members who serve in a volunteer capacity. Members are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

The Commission includes:

- 13 people with disabilities
- 3 parents of people with disabilities, and
- 9 representatives of public and private service providing agencies

The Commission also includes ex-officio members that are appointed to represent the Departments of Health and Human Services, Transportation, Recreation, Libraries, Office of Human Resources, Human Rights Commission. There are also members who represent Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools, and the Housing Opportunities Commission.

### MEETINGS

The Commission meets the second Wednesday of the month, except for July and August. Commission meetings are held at the Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville. The November meeting is a Planning Retreat and is held in an off-site location. The meetings are held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and are open to the public. Individuals are encouraged to call the office to confirm meeting times and places.

### COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Commission operates through a committee/workgroup structure that is re-evaluated annually to respond to changing needs. There is a Steering Committee that is responsible for planning and directing the activities of the Commission and for overseeing the activities of the committees. The Chairperson also appointed the following committees:

- Disability Services Oversight Committee
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)/ Disability Rights Committee
- Housing Workgroup
  - Visit-Ability Subgroup
  - Affordability and Support Services Subgroup
- Communication Access Workgroup

Committee membership is comprised of Commission members and interested persons from the community. Committee meetings are open to the public and are usually held at 401 Hungerford Drive in the Tan or Green Conference Room on the Lobby Level at designated times. In addition, coordinators are assigned to take lead responsibility for, public relations and legislation. The Nominating and Selection Committees, required for administration purposes, were also established.

*Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much. — Helen Keller*

## 2006 Commission and Committee Meeting Schedule

Full Monthly Commission Meeting	Disability Services Oversight Committee	Steering Committee	ADA/Disability Rights Oversight Committee	Housing Workgroup Affordability
<u>2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday</u> <u>6:30-8:00 p.m.</u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday</u> <u>4:00-5:15 p.m.</u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday</u> <u>5:30-6:30 p.m.</u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday</u> <u>6:45-8:00 p.m.</u>	<u>4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday</u> <u>9:30-11:30 a.m.</u>
<b>EOB</b> Lobby Auditorium	<b>401 HOB, 1<sup>st</sup> Fl.</b> Tan Conf. Rm.	<b>401 HOB, 1<sup>st</sup> Fl.</b> Tan Conf. Rm.	<b>401 HOB, 1<sup>st</sup> Fl.</b> Green Conf. Rm.	<b>401 HOB, 1<sup>st</sup> Fl.</b> Green Conf. Rm.
January 11	January 18	January 18	January 18	January 25
February 8	February 15	February 15	February 15	
March 8	March 15	March 15	March 15	March 22
April 12	April 19	April 19	April 19	
May 10	May 17	May 17	May 17	May 24
June 14	June 14	June 14	June 14	
July <b>RECESS</b>	July 19	July 19	July 19	July 26
August <b>RECESS</b>	August 16	August 16	August 16	
September 13	September 20	September 20	September 20	September 27
October 11	October 18	October 18	October 18	
<b>RETREAT</b> November 8 5:00-8:30, Location TBA	November 15	November 15	November 15	November 23
December 13	December 20	December 20	December 20	
<b>EOB = Executive Office Building—101 Monroe Street, Rockville</b> <b>HOB = Hungerford Office Building—401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville</b>				

The Commission and Subcommittees meets monthly and all meetings are open to the public.  
The Commission welcomes visitors to join us as we serve the County and its citizens.

Meetings are subject to change without advance notice.

Please call to confirm day and time of meetings and to request any special accommodations.

As possible, we adjust meeting dates in order to accommodate days of major religious observances.  
Members are excused from any meeting for religious observances.

### Disability-Related Websites of Interest

#### ADA Information Center for Mid-Atlantic Region

**Technical Assistance** [WWW.ADAINFO.ORG](http://WWW.ADAINFO.ORG)

*Training, information and technical assistance on the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).*

#### American Association on Health and Disability

[WWW.AAHD.US](http://WWW.AAHD.US)

*Supports health promotion and wellness initiatives for people with disabilities.*

#### Concrete Change

[WWW.CONCRETECHANGE.HOME.MINDSPING.COM](http://WWW.CONCRETECHANGE.HOME.MINDSPING.COM)

*Information on visit-ability, fair housing laws and construction costs.*

#### Department of Justice-ADA Information Line

[WWW.USDOJ.GOV/DISABILITIES](http://WWW.USDOJ.GOV/DISABILITIES)

*Provides general ADA information, answers technical questions and investigates complaints.*

#### Disability Guide [WWW.DISABILITYGUIDE.COM](http://WWW.DISABILITYGUIDE.COM)

*Information on accessible dining and nightlife guide in the greater Washington D.C. area.*

#### Eric Mohn, Local Artist with Disabilities

[WWW.ERICMOHN.COM](http://WWW.ERICMOHN.COM)

*Paints watercolor originals and prints.*

#### National Association of the Deaf (NAD) [WWW.NAD.ORG](http://WWW.NAD.ORG)

*Advocates for grater access to education, employment, health care and social services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.*

#### Services for the Visually Impaired (SVI)

[WWW.SERVICESVI.ORG](http://WWW.SERVICESVI.ORG)

*Provides information and referral, Braille and/or tape recording services and volunteer readers and shoppers,*

#### SHHH — Self Help for the Hard of Hearing

[WWW.HEARINGLOSS.ORG](http://WWW.HEARINGLOSS.ORG)

*Provides consumer advocacy, support groups, educational materials for people who are hard of hearing.*

#### Washington Ear [WWW.WASHEAR.ORG](http://WWW.WASHEAR.ORG)

*A free service for people who are blind, visually impaired and physically disabled who cannot effectively read print.*



**COMMISSION ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

**401 Hungerford Drive, 4th Floor**

**Rockville, MD 20850**



**New Information and Referral Line**

Health and Human Services has a new **INFORMATION AND REFERRAL LINE** to give County residents easy access to information about health and human services programs. The Information line is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and staffed by trained information and referral specialists with multi-lingual capacity.

**240-777-1245 (Voice) or 240-777-1295 (TTY)**  
**hhsmail@montgomerycountymd.gov**

**Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive**

**Carolyn W. Colvin, Director**

**Dr. John J. Kenney, Chief**

**Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services**

**Aging and Disability Services, Commission on People with Disabilities**

**401 Hungerford Drive, 4th Floor, Rockville, Maryland 20850**

**240-777-1246 (Voice) • 240-777-1236 (TTY) • 240-777-1288 (FAX)**

Language translation and alternative formats of this report are available upon request. For additional information on the Commission, please call or write at the address and telephone numbers listed above.

***Montgomery County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in employment or in the admission or access to its programs or services.***

2004–2005 Annual Report Prepared by:

Elizabeth (Betsy) Tolbert Luecking, *Program Manager*  
betsy.luecking@montgomerycountymd.gov

Gloria Huggins, *Office Services Coordinator*  
gloria.huggins@montgomerycountymd.gov

**November, 2005**